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AUTHOR D'Acci, Julie
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ABSTRACT

This investigation of some of the meanings of "woman" that are produced and negotiated in the interaction of television representations, viewer receptions, and the historical/industry context focuses on the "Cagney and Lacey" series--produced in the United States--as a particular instance of the cultural production and negotiation of the meanings of "woman." A study of the development of the series is used to demonstrate the ways in which several discourses and discursive practices, each with their own investments in specific ideals of "woman" and "femininity," interact to produce a variety of interpretations of the characters, to produce a general discourse of multiple definitions of "woman" and "femininity," and to construct a woman's audience for the series. A type of history of the series is also constructed by investigating several discourses and discursive practices, the television industry, publicity, the contributions of individual participants in the production process, the mainstream press, the reception of the television audience, and the U.S. Liberal Women's Movement. Intended to document the ways in which many participants, with both subjective and institutional stakes in particular and differing definitions of "woman" and "feminine," compete to articulate the representational and empirical possibilities of those categories, the paper concludes that this series holds open at least the possibilities of multiple meanings of "woman." (CGD)

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"Woman", Television and the Case of Cagney and Lacey

Julie D'Acci

Paper presented to the 1986 International Television Studies Conference

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"Woman," Television, and the Case of Cagney and Lacey

In a culture such as that of the present-day United States, representations of women and discourses regarding women are produced by a multiplicity of practices; and the struggle over the meanings of "woman" has become an activity of great critical and everyday importance. Television, as a discursive practice and producer of cultural representations is a major force in the production of meanings of woman.

In this paper, I will be examining several aspects of the relationship between women, "woman," and television. I will be employing the distinction between women and "woman" formulated by Teresa de Lauretis in her book Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, and Cinema. By "woman," she writes, I mean a fictional construct, a distillate from diverse but congruent discourses dominant in Western cultures....By women, on the other hand, I (will) mean the real historical beings who cannot as yet be defined outside of those discursive formations, but whose material existence is nonetheless certain.[1] The relationship between "woman" produced by discursive practices such as television, and women as historical/empirical subjects is neither direct nor natural, but always primarily cultural. In using the word "television," I am referring to American prime-time network TV. that is, American programming broadcast between the hours of 8-11 Eastern Standard Time by CBS, ABC, and NBC.

On a general level my purpose is to investigate some of the meanings of "woman" that are produced and negotiated in the

interaction of television representations, viewer receptions, and the historical/industry context. In speaking of meanings in this way, I am drawing from Annette Kuhn in her recent book the Power of the Image when she says that "meanings do not reside in images. They are circulated between representation, spectator, and social formation."[2] The interaction of various meanings is what I will be referring to as the "negotiation" of meanings.

On a more specific level, my purpose is to examine the series Cagney and Lacey as a particular instance of the cultural production and negotiation of the meanings of "woman." A study of the series' development demonstrates the ways in which several discourses and discursive practices, each with their own investments in specific ideals of "woman" and "femininity," interact to produce the representations of the characters Cagney and Lacey, to produce a variety of interpretations of the characters, to produce a general discourse of multiple definitions of "woman" and "femininity," and to construct a woman's audience for the series. I will be constructing a type of history of the series by investigating several discourses and discursive practices: the television industry; publicity; the contributions of the individual participants in the production process; the mainstream press; the reception of the television audience; and the US liberal Women's Movement. I am not attempting to present an exhaustive history of the series nor a complete account of the ways in which the discourses and

discursive practices listed have functioned. I am trying to document the ways in which many participants, with both subjective and institutional stakes in particular and differing definitions of "woman" and "feminine," compete to articulate the representational and empirical possibilities of those categories. The construction of a specifically "woman's audience" by these same discursive forces will also be documented. That the meanings of "woman" are multiple, continuously shifting, and actively contested both in what would traditionally be called their production and their reception will, I think, be evident.

A couple of assumptions underlie this methodological approach. The first is that this method reveals significantly more about the actual relationship between women, "woman," and television than a straight economistic analysis. An economistic analysis (as any totalizing approach) would not reveal the complex, unstable, and often haphazard processes actually involved in the representation of "woman" on television. It also would not reveal (and perhaps not even acknowledge) the similar processes involved in the receptions of the representations by women viewers, and the production of heterogeneous viewer meanings and pleasures.

The second assumption, however, is that although a variety of discursive practices, at levels of both production and reception, will be seen to interact in producing multiple

meanings of "woman," the television industry, as a discursive practice, will be seen to have particular power and force in the struggle over meanings, and in the ideological construction of the category "woman." I am not , in other words, ascribing equal cultural power to all of the discourses and discursive practices involved. Economic and political analysis (although not a totalizing economistic analysis), will, therefore, play a significant part in the method employed.

By way of clarifying what I mean by the particular cultural power of the television industry in the ongoing ideological construction of "woman," I will simply summarize a schema that I have developed more fully elsewhere.[3] Television's representations of "woman" are produced in accordance with certain industry imperatives, and these imperatives are invested in particular meanings of "woman." Some of these meanings are rooted in the notion, essential to the economic functioning of the television industry, of women as the primary (private sphere) consumers of the products advertised on TV. Consequently, representations have conventionally tended to be of "woman" as wife, mother, homemaker, beauty or sex object, lead character in domestic and situation comedies but primarily limited, in public sphere dramas, to subsidiary roles as the love-interest, wife, secretary, as nurse of the male protagonist, and the mother of his children. Another set of meanings are rooted in the notion, also essential to the economics of the TV industry, of upwardly

mobile women between the ages of 18-49, (within the last few years 23-54) as the primarily desired target audience for television programs. Consequently, representations have tended to be of upscale, often glamorous, young, primarily white (in an attempt to attract the largest possible numbers) women. Because these industry imperatives of women as consumers and as primary target audiences generate representations of "woman" that are very close to the representation of women generated by other dominant cultural discourses (such as sexuality, the family, motherhood, and heterosexual romance), the representations are sites of what Robert Allen has called an "accretion of meanings,"[4] or of what Tony Bennet has referred to as "encrustation."[5] The representations, therefore, may be seen as heavily coded to be read in certain predictable ways. But, returning to the first assumption discussed above, although the representations may be considered as coded to be read in predictable ways, they are not unconflicted ideological products, uni-vocal texts, nor necessarily received in the predictable ways. They are the sites of an "accretion of meanings" AND of multiple contradictions generated in both their production and reception.

I would now like to say a few prefatory things about Cagney and Lacey, and why I see it as important for a study of the representations of "woman" on American prime-time television. Cagney and Lacey is a one-hour dramatic television series about

two white women, middle class and upper-middle class, detectives in the New York City Police Department. It is broadcast on Monday nights at 10:00 pm EST on the CBS network. It was created by Barbara Avedon and Barbara Corday, its Executive Producer is Barney Rosenzweig, and its production company is Orion Television. It stars Sharon Gless as Christine Cagney and Tyne Daly as Mary Beth Lacey, and has been on television as a series since March of 1982. I was first interested in studying Cagney and Lacey because the series was specifically targetted to a working women's audience, was constructed as a "woman's program," and was received by a large numnber of vocal women viewers. I was also interested in studying it because of its differences regarding the representations of "woman" on television. It was the first dramatic narrative program in television history to star two women. The characters were represented as active subjects of the narrative who solved their own cases both mentally and physically. They were rarely represented as "woman-in-distress," and virtually never rescued by their male colleagues. As well as being active subjects of the narrative who functioned in both the public and private spheres, they were portrayed as active subjects, rather than objects, of sexual desire. Chris Cagney, a single woman, was represented as having an active sex life which she would often initiate. Similarly, Mary Beth Lacey, the married woman, was represented as a sexual initiator with her husband, Harvey. Mary Beth was, furthermore,

the bread-winner of the family, and Harvey an out-of-work construction worker who cooked and took care of the house and the two kids. The ages of the actresses and characters were 35, and there was a distinct minimization of glamour on the levels of clothing, hairstyles and makeup. The characters were originally (and I will discuss this change in more detail) from middle to lower-middle class backgrounds, and they were both working women. They were represented as close friends who took a lot of pleasure in one another's company and spent a lot of screen time talking. Much of the early script material came directly from discourses of the early US liberal women's movement. The first scripts dealt with male discrimination on the job and contained such material as a riff between Cagney and Lacey about the various ways in which Lt. Samuels, their commanding officer, was a "pig."[6]

Cagney and Lacey became even more interesting to me because of the limitations of these differences; because of what gets made of these differences in the press (both feminist and mainstream), and in viewer and industry responses; and also because of what happens to these differences in the history of the series. The history of the series not only makes quite explicit a variety of struggles over the meanings of "woman," but also opens onto the question of the conditions of possibility for the representation of "woman" on television.

Before investigating their interactions and operations in

the history of Cagney and Lacey, I want to say several things about the discursive practices I will be discussing, and the data I will be using. With regard to the Television Industry, I will be making reference to such practices of the television industry as the internal censorship of writers and producers, audience testing, and network censorship. I will make reference to the conventions of the television industry with regard to the age, race, and class of television's representations of "woman"; the conventional representation of "woman" as wife, mother, and domesticated beauty or sex object; and the limitation of "woman" with regard to television genres. My data will include documents, letters, and memos from CBS, Orion Television, the Cagney and Lacey production offices, published articles, and interviews I conducted. Much of the material for this and for the following practices, comes from the production files of Cagney and Lacey's Executive Producer, Barney Rosenzsweig.

With regard to Publicity, I will be examining documents from Rogers and Cowen, Tom Brocato and Associates, and Brocato and Kelman, the public relations firms hired by Orion to promote Cagney and Lacey. I will also make reference to publicity and promotional material from CBS, Orion Television, the Cagney and Lacey offices and the press. I have decided to examine publicity as a separate practice rather than group it under the general category I am calling the Television Industry for several reasons. The construction of a specific target audience of

working women for Cagney and Lacey made the role of the public relations firms and the general publicity for the series of particular importance. The troubled ratings history of Cagney and Lacey also forced those involved in the production process to generate a variety of publicity strategies for enlarging and securing its audience. Because the strategies employed, the type of woman-audience sought, and the various meanings of "woman" generated in the process are very important to my particular investigation, it seemed necessary to study publicity as a distinct practice.

I have also developed a separate category of practice called the Contributions of Individual Participants in the Production Process. I did this in order to deal with the contributions of the creators, writers, producers, actresses, and production staff especially in those instances in which the participant is advocating a "controversial" position regarding the representation of "woman," that is, a position which seems to proceed more from his or her own set of informing discourses than from those informed by the exigencies of the television industry. My data for this category are drawn from notes I took during a three month observation period on the Cagney and Lacey set and in a variety of Cagney and Lacey production meetings. Data are also drawn from interviews I conducted with many of the production participants; and from published statements.

In discussing the Mainstream Press, I will be employing

articles from a variety of newspapers and magazines including the New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Chicago Tribune, and the writing of journalists whose work is widely syndicated. I will be making use of citations from the mainstream press in two primary ways. First, I will be using them as examples of a particular critic's or journalist's own discursive interpretation. Secondly, I will be using statements from both the mainstream and feminist presses as examples of publicity for the series. Since many articles on television programs are "planted" by the public relations firms hired to promote the programs, or solicited by producers (in the case of Cagney and Lacey by Barney Rosenzweig), and many of them feature interviews with actors, producers and industry spokespeople, many may be seen as direct fora for the discourses of the industry and as direct publicity for the particular program. All press, of course, whether an unsolicited critical review or an industry "plant" functions as, at least, indirect publicity for the series.

With regard to the practice I am calling the Reception of the Television Audience, I will referring to a random sample of several hundred audience letters sent by viewers to the Cagney and Lacey production offices, to CBS, and to Orion Television. The letters span the years 1982-1984. I will also be referring to letters published in TV Guide, and read on 60 Minutes, interviews with viewers published in the press, and my own

interviews with viewers. In examining audience reception as a practice, I am, more precisely, examining the interpretations and responses of individual audience members who are situated in a variety of social, racial, economic, national, political, psycho-sexual, gender, age and community contexts; and who are informed by a variety of discourses. I am investigating aspects of audience reception to illustrate the ways in which meanings of "woman" in fact circulate among representation, social context, and spectator; and to demonstrate the ways in which these meanings are necessarily multiple.

The final practice I will be referring to is that of the women's movement. The women's movement, particularly the US liberal women's movement, has had, as I hope to demonstrate, an enormous effect on Cagney and Lacey, and I would like to say several things about my approach to it as a discursive practice here.

When using the phrase "US liberal women's movement," I am referring to a number of things: the determination by this part of the women's movement to achieve material gains for women in both the public and private spheres; the focus on conditions of women's everyday lives; and the attention to issues such as the representation of women in the media, and women's friendship. I am also referring to two assumptions of the liberal women's movement regarding social change and representation which I find problematic, and which figure in the history of Cagney and Lacey.

The first is the basic assumption that representational practices (film, television, print material) can promote social change for women by producing representations of women which reflect more accurately and more positively the "real-life" changes and conditions of "real-life women." This "reflection theory" of representational practices assumes both a non-problematic correspondence between "woman" as represented in cultural texts and empirical women. It assumes these things, I would argue, because it does not examine the ideological character of the concept "real-life" or the ideological, mediational and industrial aspects of representational practices.

The second assumption which I find problematic follows from the first. It is the tendency to carry over the basic tenets of liberalism regarding social change into the area of representational practice. Appeals for equal rights, equal pay, and individualism, become appeals for equality of representation. The result is a call for pluralism of representation, the practice of role reversals, and the focus on individual accomplishment. Women on television--black, white, Hispanic, Asian and other minorities--should be represented as having "made it" by being portrayed as doctors, lawyers, business women and so forth. The lack of examination of the relationship of these representations to the support and reproduction of social power structures is highly problematic when speaking about

social change, or "difference" regarding the representation of "woman." All of these issues from the liberal US women's movement--those which I read as empowering change and difference, and those which I read as limiting them--play, as I hope to show, active roles in the history of Cagney and Lacey.

In discussing the women's movement, I will be making reference to published books; to articles in the feminist press such as Ms., National NOW Times, and NOW LA; to public statements and actions by women's movement representatives; to interviews I conducted with representatives of the women's movement and participants in the Cagney and Lacey production process; and to women's movement discourses in audience letters and in articles in the mainstream press.

The practices I have just discussed, as I already indicated in several instances, will be seen to overlap with one another in the discursive history of Cagney and Lacey I will be constructing. Many of the press articles, as I mentioned earlier, will be seen to function as publicity. I have separated the practices into six distinct categories primarily as a way of getting some analytic control over the material. I will examine in some detail the early history of Cagney and Lacey to demonstrate specifically how the various discourses operate and interact. I will then give an outline sketch of the later history.

The early history of Cagney and Lacey, from its conception

in 1975 to its production as a made-for-TV-movie in 1981, demonstrates the interaction of several discursive practices and the negotiation of a variety of meanings of "woman." I will be focusing primarily on the interactions of the three original participants in the production process, Barbara Avedon, Barbara Corday, and Barney Rosenzweig; the discourses of the women's movement; and the discourses of the television (and film) industries. I will also refer to an article in the mainstream press which incorporates some early viewer responses. The negotiations revolve around the meanings of "woman" with regard to such issues as age, glamour, "femininity," status as subject or object, position in Hollywood genres, and position in the labor market. This early history also demonstrates the role of the women's movement in actively publicizing the made-for-TV-movie and in creating a committed and invested women's audience; and the limitations of "difference" regarding the representation of "woman" in Cagney and Lacey.

Cagney and Lacey was conceived in 1975 solidly within the discourses of the US liberal women's movement. It was to be a motion picture that would feature role reversals, women in a traditionally male profession, and women in a standard male public-sphere genre. Historically and industrially speaking, its creators considered it an idea whose time had come.[7]

According to Avedon, Corday, and Rosenzweig in interviews I conducted with them, and in published articles, Cagney and Lacey

was specifically conceived as a response to an early and influential book from the women's movement, Molly Haskell's From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies. Avedon and Corday were engaged in the literature and politics of the early US women's movement, and both were in women's groups. Rosenzweig was "setting out to have his consciousness raised." They read Haskell's book and were intrigued by the fact that there had never been a Hollywood movie about two women "buddies" comparable to M*A*S*H or Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.[8] According to Rosenzweig,

> The Hollywood establishment had totally refused women those friendships, the closest thing being perhaps Joan Crawford and Eve Arden in Mildred Pierce, the tough lady boss and her wise-cracking sidekick. So I went to my friend Ed Feldman, who was then head of Filmways [now Orion], and I said, "I want to do a picture where we turn around a conventional genre piece like Freebie and The Bean with its traditional male situations and make it into the first real hit feminist film.[9]

Corday says,

> Barney came to this conclusion not so much, at that time, as a feminist (because he was very new to all of those ideas then), but came to the conclusion as a commercial producer, that it was extraordinary that there had never been a female buddy movie; and at that moment in history, it would probably be a great idea. He talked to me about it and I went to my partner, Barbara, and we talked about it. We conceived of it, all of us, as a feature, because that's what the buddy movies were, they were feature films.[10]

One of the main motivations behind Cagney and Lacey from its inception was the creators' notion that two women could, in fact,

be represented as friends who worked and talked together, rather than as conventionally-portrayed competitors, in Rosenzweig's words, "as buddies not bitches."[11] Both Avedon and Corday speak about the ways in which the relationship between Cagney and Lacey was modelled (if somewhat unconsciously) on their own eight-year relationship as writing partners and friends. Corday says,

> We were women, we were partners, we were best friends. We were a lot of the things that we were writing about....We spent a good deal of the eight years that we wrote together talking about our lives....What we tried to get into the characters...was us. We didn't say we were doing it, or set out to do it but there we were....I'm more Mary Beth, Barbara's more Chris, but there are pieces of each of us in the other....Barbara is very politically involved, very active in causes. I'm more conservative....I finish her sentences for her. She's the one who races off as Chris does. I'm the one who says maybe we should talk about this for a minute.[12]

Ed Feldman, at Filmways, was, in fact, interested in the idea Rosenzweig had pitched to him, and gave Rosenzweig the "seed" money to hire Avedon and Corday as writers.[13] Barbara Avedon recalls that although Filmways was "excited" about the idea, they had difficulty understanding the view of women involved. "They [Filmways] told us things like, when [Cagney or Lacey] rips her shirt back and shows her badge to the guys, they can all stare [at her breasts]. That," continues Avedon, "was the level of consciousness, even though they [Filmways] were doing a women-buddy movie."[14]

Avedon and Corday prepared for writing the script by

spending ten days in New York with New York policewomen. Avedon recalls, "the women cops we met were first and foremost cops. Unlike Angie Dickinson in Police Woman who´d powder her nose before she went out to make a bust, these women took themselves seriously as police offiers."[15] Both Corday and Avedon were convinced that the only way for Cagney and Lacey to work was if they cast "strong," "mature" women, with "senses of humor." They envisioned Sally Kellerman and Paula Prentiss for the parts. Kellerman as Cagney, and Prentiss as Lacey.[16] Avedon, Corday, and Rosenzweig wanted the characters to be represented as competent and independent women, but felt the whole concept would work and be marketable only if the movie were "funny" and "entertaining."[17]

The original script, entitled "Freeze," was a spoof in which Cagney and Lacey uncover the existence of The Godmother, the female intelligence behind a brothel where men are the prostitutes and women the patrons.[18] The major narrative device was this early women´s movement notion of role reversals. Not only did the Godmother replace the Godfather and the prostitutes and patrons reverse roles but, with regard to the characters Cagney and Lacey, as Avedon says, "we turned every cliché over, even the unpleasant ones. We had Cagney say to a guy ´I´ll give you a call sometime,´ and then turn around and walk out insensitively. I really didn´t like her very much for doing it."[19]

The limitations of difference with regard to the representations of "woman" on Cagney and Lacey can, therefore, be seen from the outset. It is important to address this issue here because in the history of Cagney and Lacey a great deal gets made of the magnitude of the difference regarding Cagney and Lacey's representation of woman. The practices of role reversals, as I mentioned earlier, essentially accepts uncritically the basic societal structures and power arrangements, and limits the difference with regard to the representation of "woman" to the assumption of previously defined male positions or roles. That there would be limits to the difference on Cagney and Lacey is, of course, not surprising, given the conventions of the television industry regarding the representation of "woman," given the specific goals of the US liberal women's movement, of liberal reform, and given the fact that those differences which are present in the representations of "woman" on Cagney and Lacey have been, as I hope now to show, secured only after great sruggle.

After having the script financed by Filmways, Rosenzweig needed a major motion picture studio to pick it up and do the actual production. He took the original property to every studio in Hollywood and got such responses from the industry as "these women aren't soft enough, aren't feminine enough."[20] At MGM, Sherry Lansing (who was later to become the first woman head of a major motion picture studio, Paramount) persuaded her boss, Dan

Melnik, to make the movie. MGM said it would but only if well-known "sex symbols" Raquel Welch and Ann Margaret starred. (Welch and Margaret had not yet demonstrated their versatility as actresses at this point in Hollywood history.) The other stipulation was a 1.6 million dollar budget which, in a kind of catch-22 fashion, prohibited the hiring of such high-priced actresses.[21] The property, therefore, lay dormant for the next five years.

In 1980 Rosenzweig decided to have another go at it. According to Avedon and Corday, it was only because of Rosenzweig's dogged perserverance that Cagney and Lacey ever actually got into production.[22] Corday and Avedon reconceptualized the script to update it and make it less of a spoof and more of a "realistic" crime drama.[23] Because Corday, by this time, had taken a job as vice-president of comedy development at ABC, Barbara Avedon wrote the actual script herself. This time, Rosenzweig took the script to the television networks as a pilot for a weekly series. Although CBS would not pick it up as a series, it decided it would take it as a less costly, less risky, made-for-TV movie. CBS also suggested that Rosenzweig cast "two sexy young actresses."[24] According to Rosenzweig, he told CBS,

> You don't understand, these policewomen must be mature women. One has a family and kids, the other is a committed career officer. What separates this project from Charlie's Angels is that Cagney and Lacey are women; they're not girls and they're certainly not

objects.[25]

During this impasse CBS, which had an outstanding commitment to Loretta Swit, asked Rosenzweig to cast Swit as Cagney. Rosenzweig (although he says he considered her "perfect" for the part) objected because Swit's commitment to the TV series M*A*S*H would preclude her availability should the opportunity to turn Cagney and Lacey into a series arise.[26] Barbara Avedon wanted Sharon Gless for the Cagney role. She had recently worked with Gless on the television series Turnabout, and says she had considered Gless the model for Chris Cagney while writing the new Cagney and Lacey script.[27] Rosenzweig says he tried but was unable to get Gless because she was under contract to Universal.[28] He, therefore, went ahead with Loretta Swit as Cagney and cast Tyne Daly as Lacey.

Richard Rosenbloom, the president of Filmways Television and a staff producer at Filmways, joined the project as the movie's line producer, and Ted Post, known as an action director, was hired to direct. The movie was shot in Toronto with a budget of $1.85 million.[29] It was scheduled for broadcast on October 8, 1981, and was publicized in various ways by the women's movement, the television industry, and the mainstream press.

The made-for-TV- movie was vigorously publicized by and positioned within the discourses of the women's movement. The representations were seen as important for the causes of the women's movement especially with regard to women's friendship,

women´s independence, and women working in non-traditional jobs. Gloria Steinem at Ms magazine had been sent a script by the creators[30] and was so enthusiastic that the cover of the October issue of Ms pictured Loretta Swit and Tyne Daly in police uniforms as Cagney and Lacey.[31] The issue also contained a feature article on Cagney and Lacey written by Marjorie Rosen, a well known feminist film critic and author of Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream. The article retold the troubled history of the property, and emphasized its importance for feminism. It ended with a pitch for a weekly series and articulated what it saw as some of the important meanings of "woman" brought into "distinctive focus" by the movie:

> [W]atching Cagney and Lacey, it is virtually impossible not to think of its potential as a weekly series. For here´s a rare TV movie that not only sports such surefire ingredients as crime, cops, and a pair of great buddies, but also maintains its distinctive focus on two highly individualistic, courageous, and thoroughly independent women--women we´d like to get to know better, and women who are worth visiting with again and again.[32]

At the bottom of the article appears the message "If you would like to see Cagney and Lacey expanded into a TV series write to Richard Rosenbloom, Filmways, 2049 Century Park East, Los Angeles, California 90067."[33]

Gloria Steinem appeared with Loretta Swit on The Phil Donahue Show to plug the movie, "in tones," according to one media critic, "so reverential it sounded as though they were

promoting the first woman president ."[34] As I will be demonstrating, these were only the first of many interventions on behalf of Cagney and Lacey by representatives of the Women's Movement, and by feminist journalists both in the feminist and mainstream press. (The Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women, for example, had only two goals in 1983: 1] to get Ronald Reagan out of office and 2] to keep Cagney and Lacey on the prime-time schedule).[35]

The movie was publicized by CBS according to a standard television industry advertising practice (especially for made-for-TV-movies and mini-series), called "exploitation advertising." This is a practice, with precedents in the Hollywood film industry, in which a sensational, usually sexual or violent, aspect of a program is highlighted for the purposes of audience attraction. The Cagney and Lacey movie advertisement is a three-quarter page ad.[36] A large close-up of Loretta Swit with long blonde hair dominates three-quarters of the left side of the ad, her clasped, outstretched hands contain a pointed revolver which dominates the right side of the ad. A significantly smaller meduim shot of the lesser known (at the time) Tyne Daly in police coat, shirt and tie is under the Swit close-up. On the far left of the page, under and smaller than the Daly image, is a shot of Swit lying on her back (presumably naked) with a sheet draped over her. One bare shoulder and arm, and one bare leg bent at the knee are exposed. A man, seen only

from his waist up (also naked) is leaning over and on top of her, his arm is over her body. The copy reads, "It´s their first week as undercover cops! Cagney likes the excitement. Lacey cares about the people she protects. They´re going to make it as detectives--or die trying."

A number of meanings of "woman" are set into play here and there are, no doubt, many possible readings and interpretations of this one ad. One interpretation I would like to advance is that the television industry, in dealing with a movie about "woman" in nontraditional roles, is careful, in its advertising, to invoke not only meanings regarding the "new woman," but meanings regarding the conventional woman as well. Swit is shown as a cop with an aimed revolver but also as a conventionally beautiful woman with eye make-up, lipstick and long blonde hair. She is also shown as a conventional object rather than subject of sexual desire. I would argue that the inclusion of this image of "woman" as spectacle for and object of male desire, as one of the three images in an ad for a movie about women in new roles, carries a particular charge. It not only fulfills the formula for exploitation advertising by suggesting sexual content to the audience, but also reassures the audience with regard to "woman´s" conventional role and position regarding societal power.

Lacey is shown in traditionally male clothing but is described in the traditionally feminine way of "caring about the

people she protects." They are both spoken about as trying to "make it" as detectives, but also as conventional "woman-in-distress" who may "die trying." The television industry not only in its advertising, but also in its general handling of representations of the "new woman," "woman" in non-traditional roles, and specifically of Cagney and Lacey will repeatedly be seen to be anxious about keeping in play conventional meanings of "woman."

The movie was also publicized in the mainstream press. In an article in the New York Times which was published the day before the airing of the movie, Barbara Basler interviews three New York policewomen who were shown a preview of the movie.[37] The article demonstrates the ways that the mainstream press begins to be a part of the struggle over the meanings of "woman" which develops in response to Cagney and Lacey. It is also a good example of two issues that will figure repeatedly throughout the history of the series. First, it exemplifies the way in which "reality" gets invoked in the struggle over the meanings of "woman." Different participants in the history of Cagney and Lacey will invoke "reality," "real life experience," or the experience of "real policewomen" as a support for their own particular notions of what "woman" on Cagney and Lacey should or should not be. Although I will not be able to deal fully here with this "invocation of reality" and the representation of "woman," I want to point out that it makes overt the problem

(referred to above in the section on the US liberal Women´s Movement) of a liberal notion of representation which accepts at face value the category "real life" and does not interrogate its ideological dimensions. The title of the Basler article is "Real Policewomen View the TV Variety" and basicallly, the article praises the representations of Cagney and Lacey as true-to-life. A few months later, however, Howard Rosenberg in the Los Angeles Times will interview three Los Angeles policewomen who severely challenge the reality of the representations in favor of their own definitions of "woman" and "femininity."[38] The Basler article also demonstrates the different ways in which the different policewomen interviewed match up Cagney and Lacey with "reality":

> ´It´s true to life all right,´ said Patricia Holmes, who has been a New York City police officer for 19 years. ´The men on the force are just as obnoxious as the cops in the movie.´ But another officer, Maria Fitzgerald, said that in her eight and a half years in the department she had never experienced the kind of icy rejection depicted in the film....Still, she recalled, ´on my first assignment, the man who was supposed to be my partner refused to go with me.´[39]

Secondly, the article exemplifies what I mean when I say that the meanings of "woman" that get produced surrounding Cagney and Lacey do not "reside in the representation" but are circulated among the social context (here, the historical situation with regard to women´s position in a particular labor market); the particular spectators´s response (three policewomen with

different viewer interpretations); and the representation (Cagney and Lacey). "For years," Basler writes

> women on the police force were virtually segregated from the men, assigned only to cases involving other women or children...women could not be promoted to sergeant. But, by 1973, women were finally in uniform, out on patrol and eligible for promotions. [According to Officer Mary Della Rocca] "The men all said, 'you shouldn't be on patrol, you don't have the strength.' And their wives picketed...saying we couldn't protect their husbands, and we'd steal their men....you have to prove yourself more than a man, but after that--well--I haven't a problem.[40]

But when discussing the representation of Chris Cagney the policewomen had differing views. Officer Maria Fitzgerald said, "she came on too hard and strong, she was too gung-ho. Everything was job, job, job..." Officer Holmes, on the other hand, said "A woman has to be super great today and then, maybe, the men will say 'she's not so bad.'"[41]

The article generally demonstrates the ways that the representations of Cagney and Lacey generate discourses regarding not only the characters on the series but also the possibilities of "woman" in the social context outside the series.

The movie aired at 8:00 pm on Thursday, October 8, 1981, and captured an astonishing 42% share of the television audience (CBS had been getting a 28 or 29 share in this time period.)[42] "Within 36 hours," CBS was on the telephone to Barney Rosenzweig asking him to get a weekly series together.[43] Gloria Steinem and Ms magazine staff members had already lobbied members of the

CBS board[44] urging them to make a series out of the movie.

The second phase of Cagney and Lacey's history, the television series starring Tyne Daly and Meg Foster, dates from March 1982 to August 1982 (including the summer rerun period). In investigating this phase of the history, I will be focusing on the interaction of the mainstream press, the television industry (specifically CBS), the participants in the production process, and television viewers in negotiating a variety of meanings of "woman." The negotiations revolve around the issues of women working outside the home, equality with men, physical appearance, friendships between women, lesbianism, opposition to "the system," and the qualities of "toughness" and "masculinity." Discourses from and about the Women's Movement can be seen to circulate throughout the interaction. The industry's push to attract a working-women target audience also begins to be apparent.

The original series, starring Tyne Daly and Meg Foster as the new Chris Cagney, premiered on March 25, 1982. The first script was written by Barbara Avedon, Barbara Corday, and Barney Rosenzweig. It was publicized by Filmways in press releases as "two top-notch female cops who fight crime while proving themselves to male colleagues."[45] Gloria Steinem and Ms magazine, keeping alive the link between the Women's Movement and Cagney and Lacey, organized a reception for the stars and

creators in early March.[46] The angle of women working in non-traditional jobs and fighting sexism was emphasized both in the publicity for the series and the scripts. It is important, I think, to see this within the context of the television industry trying to attract a working women´s audience. The very night and hour Cagney and Lacey premiered, the series 9 to 5, based on the hit movie of the same name, premiered on another network, ABC. Six months later, in the fall of 1982, four other working women-oriented programs (Gloria, Remington Steele, It Takes Two, and Square Pegs), were also added to the schedule. The fact that Cagney and Lacey and 9 to 5 were scheduled opposite one another would prove costly for both series in terms of ratings. Gloria Steinem, speaking at a Hollywood Radio and Television Society luncheon, a month before the premieres, had in fact protested this scheduling saying it might "split the audience and hurt each other´s [the two series´] chances."[47]

Of the thirty-five press reviews I read on the series premiere, most were lukewarm or favorable; and all dealt with the meanings of "woman" triggered by the series. Most mentioned the Women´s Movement discourses in the script: the "chauvinism" of the male detectives, Mary Beth and Harvey´s role reversals, and the "juggling" for working women of both personal lives and careers. "Tyne Daly," reads one article, "is Mary Beth Lacey, wife, mother and breadwinner who juggles a tough career along with her family responsibilities....Meg Foster is Chris Cagney a

single, attractive and ambitious policewoman who takes 'dead aim' on criminals and department chauvinists alike."[48]

Several articles said such things as "the show's message of female discrimination is too obvious and heavy-handed,"[49] and "the not-too-subtle message here is that women have to be twice as good to look equal with a man--a topic which could be the Achilles' heel of the series if pounded home too strongly."[50] Many also pointed out the difference between Cagney and Lacey and other representations of "woman" on television. Such phrases as "no racy Charlie's Angels style glamour here,"[51] "mature women not girls or sex objects,"[52] "not clothes horses a la Angie Dickinson,"[53] and "realistic crimebusting from the female perspective minus the giggle and jiggle"[54] were common. Many articles commented with impunity on the women's bodies, appraising them with regard to conventional television notions of glamour. "Ms. Daly," one of the articles reads, "has a plain face, a schlumpy figure, a thick Eastern accent. She's not sexy on the outside....Meg Foster is the better looking but far more of a tomboy than a sex symbol."[55] And, another reads, "while Foster and Daly are attractive they look and act ordinary enough to be believable...they are even occasionally permitted to look rumpled, discouraged, crabby."[56] And again, "Past shows have had one token woman--with the exception of Charlies' Angels, which featured a team of Wonder Women dressed and coifed from Rodeo Drive rather than DC Comics. Cagney and Lacey, on the other

hand, are cops. They look like real people. They are cute rather than beautiful."[57]

For the next full year, running commentary on the bodies of the two characters will be a standard inclusion in many articles on Cagney and Lacey. The practice demonstrates not only the perceived difference on the levels of the bodies of the characters/actresses between Cagney and Lacey and other television representations of "woman," but also the presumed access to women's bodies that television, film and photographic representations have conventionalized. Further, by obsessing on the bodies of the women represented and reproducing a traditional way of assessing the value and meaning of "woman," this press commentary works (at least to some degree and in some instances despite itself) to contain the difference set into play by the representations of Cagney and Lacey. "Woman" in this commentary becomes limited to, and identified with her body.

Many of the articles also stressed the rapport between the two actresses and the two characters. "It is the natural charisma which exists between Daly and Foster," reads one review, "which makes Cagney and Lacey a step above the norm. It is this caring for each other that allows the viewer to care for them."[58] And, "the two make a good pair, and Miss Foster has toned down the high-pitched anger Miss Swit overdid in the pilot."[59] Another reviewer writes, somewhat prophetically, "The two women are human beings, not just women, and as Simone de

Beauvoir wrote, whenever women start acting like human beings they are accused of trying to be men."[60]

Despite the favorable press, and without much consideration for the fact that it was scheduled in competition with 9 to 5 (a program that attracted the same target audience), the network wanted to cancel Cagney and Lacey after two episodes.[61] CBS did not, in fact, allocate advertising money to promote the series' third episode in TV Guide (9 to 5 had a half-page ad).[62]

There is no doubt that the first episodes of Cagney and Lacey were a ratings disappointment to the network and were responsible for losing the large lead-in audience attracted by Magnum PI,[63] the program which preceded it. But, the high share garnered by the Cagney and Lacey movie/pilot, and the series' competition from 9 to 5 would normally, it seems, have indicated a schedule change rather than cancellation as the networks' first intervention.

The data indicate several reasons behind CBS' push to cancel rather than change Cagney and Lacey's position in the schedule. The first reason involves an original ambivalence regarding Cagney and Lacey on the part of CBS' series development division. According to Rosezweig there was reluctance about supporting Cagney and Lacey as a series from the beginning. "The thing you have to realize about Cagney and Lacey," says Rosenzweig,

> is that it was not developed as a series, but as a

> movie for CBS. At CBS, there are series executives and there are movie executives. And not only do they not talk to each other in the hallways, they're in different buildings. Now remember that the series' people had all turned it down the first time around--it was developed by the movie people. So there was a whole group of executives at CBS who didn't want Cagney and Lacey to succeed.[64]

In another interview, however, Rosenzweig said, "there were also people [at series development] who believed in it for a series."[65]

The series would have been cancelled abruptly had not Rosenzweig persuaded Harvey Shephard, vice president in charge of programming for CBS, to give Cagney and Lacey a Trapper John rerun spot on Sunday, April 25 at 10:00 pm. Rosenzweig argued that Cagney and Lacey was an adult program rather than one which would also attract children, and that it required a later time period.[66] Shephard reluctantly agreed, but once again, voiced CBS' ambivalence by telling Rosenzweig to "save his money,"[67] when Rosenzweig said Filmways would put up $25,000 to send Meg Foster and Tyne Daly across the country to stump for the series prior to the Sunday night airing.

Filways did, however, take the financial risk and send Foster and Daly on the road. In a one-week campaign, organized by Brocato and Kelman public relations company, Daly and Foster, in separate itineraries, covered between them, the cities of Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, and New York. They gave

approximately fifty radio, television, and print interviews including a Washington, D.C., television talk show interview with Tyne Daly and Betty Friedan "on the topic of women's rights."[68]

The Sunday, April 25 episode of Cagney and Lacey pulled in an impressive 34 share, and ranked number seven in the overall ratings. Despite the success, Harvey Shephard told Rosenzweig that many members of the CBS board (responsible for the final renewal of decisions) would consider the 34 share "a fluke."[69] He said he would fight for the series renewal only if Rosenzweig made a significant change in the program. The change was to replace Meg Foster as Chris Cagney.[70]

At this point in the history of Cagney and Lacey other factors regarding CBS' ambivalence begin to emerge. These factors are directly related to the meanings of "woman" generated by the series and can, I think, be demonstrated to be the most salient factors in CBS' ambivalence about supporting it. In a Daily Variety article on May 25, 1982, and a Hollywood Reporter article on May 28, Harvey Shephard spoke publically about the replacement of Meg Foster and the renewal of Cagney and Lacey. Shephard is quoted in both articles as saying that "several mistakes were made with the show in that the stories were too gritty, the characterizations of both Cagney and Lacey were too tough and there was not enough contrast between these two partners."[71]

Several weeks after the Shephard statements appeared, an

article by Frank Swertlow, in the "TV Update" section of the June 12-18 TV Guide, revealed yet other factors behind CBS´s ambivalence and its decision to replace Foster. According to Swertlow, Cagney and Lacey was to be "softened" because CBS believed the main characters were "too tough, too hard and not feminine." The article quoted an unnamed CBS programmer who said the show was being revised to make the characters "less aggressive." He went on to say "They were too harshly women´s lib,....These women on Cagney and Lacey," he continued, "seemed more intent on fighting the system than doing police work. We perceived them as dykes."[72]

There are undoubtedly many dimensions to this incident, but I want to focus on two here. The first is the presence, from the beginning of the series, of discourses which either associate Meg Foster with lesbianism or imply a lesbian overtone to the relationship of Cagney and Lacey. The second are CBS´ statements regarding audience research which indicated that viewers perceived the characters of Cagney and Lacey as "tough" and "masculine."

With regard to the discourses regarding lesbianism, I would like to list three examples, and then discuss what I see as their potential impact. First, fairly straightforward references appear in articles in the press concerning Meg Foster´s earlier portrayal of a lesbian in the film A Different Story.[73] She is, perhaps provocatively, quoted in an article in US Magazine as

saying about the movie, "I played a lesbian; it was my favorite role."[74] Secondly, Barbara Avedon recalled an event which occurred after Meg Foster´s reading for the Chris Cagney role. According to Avdeon, after a "brilliant" reading by Foster which "stood out head and shoulders above all the others, I said ´she´s my choice.´" An executive in casting, Avedon continued, "walked me out of the room with the other executivess and said ´she´s trouble, she´s a dyke, she can´t carry a series." The executive, says Avedon, "was really a detractor from the beginning."[75]

And thirdly, Tyne Daly, in an article by Jane Ardmore discusses what she calls the "fear" which surrounded the concept of Cagney and Lacey from the first episode. "We are," she says, "playing two women in what are customarily thought of as men´s jobs; that´s where the fear comes in." Ardmore continues,

> Her [Tyne Daly´s] first glimpse of fear occurred on the first episode of the series in which the two cops dressed up like hookers to go out on the street and apprehend solicitors. While they were dressing for the assignment, Chris Cagney came over and helped her partner with the clasp of her necklace. Somebody on the set said it looked "seamy."

"She [Daly] and Meg," the article continues, "were interviewed for Entertainment Tonight....the first question was, ´What´s all this stuff about a lesbian connection on the show?´"[76]

Whatever the connections, if any, among the examples listed, it seems safe to say that some association of the series with lesbianism, homophobia, and even an attempt at outright

discrimination (in the actions of the executive who at least thought the actress was a "dyke") can be seen as operative from the beginning of Cagney and Lacey. I would argue that it gave CBS a way in which to think about and cast its objections with regard to the non-conventional and apparently threatening representations of "woman" on the series.

The public explanation by CBS was that audience research had discovered objections to the representations. According to Arnold Becker, Chief of Research for CBS, audience research, drawn from a sample of 160 persons, had picked up such comments on Cagney and Lacey as "inordinately abrasive, loud and lacking warmth," and "they should be given a measure of traditional female appeal, especially Chris."[77] Becker is also, however, quoted in giving his own, not the audience research, opinion about the characters: "Even in the first show," he says, "when they [Cagney and Lacey] dressed like hookers, they weren´t sexy looking--they were sort of like burlesque." He also adds that the allusion "to homosexuality" in TV Guide was "quite unfair." "Those tested," he said "thought of Cagney and Lacey as masculine, not that they were lovers."[78]

It is undoubtedly likely that some viewers found the Cagney and Lacey representations offensive. I would speculate, however, that CBS gave such importance to the comments it may have picked up in the audience research (rather than, for instance, to the contradictory comments in the press reviews cited earlier)

because of a prior disposition regarding the representations, and an extreme cautiousness and discomfort about producing non-conventional representations of "woman." It is also possible, of course, that the design of the audience research testing tool, even inadvertently, elicited certain responses from the viewers tested. Whatever the exact background, the "tough, masculine woman intent on fighting the system," CBS´ definition of "dyke," came to mark some of the limits regarding the possibilities for the representation of "woman" in a prime-time TV series at this particular period and on this particular network.

After Meg Foster was released from her contract she had initial difficulty getting other work. According to a United Feature syndicate article, prior to that she "was an in-demand actress. But there was no official announcement of why she was fired, so some people jumped to some pretty wild conclusions....They want no part of a troublemaker. Later," the article continues," an official story came out and from then on Meg´s offers picked up again."[79] Barney Rosezweig says he tried to save Foster´s job by suggesting to CBS that they dye her hair blonde (as a way of achieving "character contrast" with the also brunette Daly).[80] He also says he told CBS that the lack of contrast was his fault (not Foster´s) by making Cagney and Lacey both "lower class New York street-types."[81] Rosenzweig admits, however, to giving in to the network rather quickly and making Meg Foster the "scapegoat" in order to save the series.[82]

The viewer response and press which generated discussion on the meaings of "woman" raised by the incident was considerable. Howard Rosenberg of the LA Times starts his column with the questions "What is feminine? What is masculine? What is CBS doing?" He then asks, "Are the old Cagney and Lacey too strident? Even too masculine? For the definitive answer," he continues, "I contacted Detective Helen Kidder and Detective Peggy York, partners in the Los Angeles Police Department. He quotes Kidder as saying, "I watched the show once and I was so turned off. They looked rough and tough, and they weren't terribly feminine, just in the way they dressed and acted. They were so, you know, New York....Peggy and I wear good suits, nylons and pretty shoes, silk blouses, the hair, everything. Not that that keeps you from being a dyke."[83] Sharon Rosenthal of the New York Daily News writes, "Not feminine enough? By whose standards? I wondered. Wasn't the whole point of the show to portray women on television in a new, more enlightened manner?"[84] And Barbara Holsopple of the Pittsburgh Press, in writing about what the network wanted for Cagney and Lacey says, "Not tough cops, mind you. Nice feminine, good ones. Those yo-yos at the network were second-guessing us again."[85]

It is, as I mentioned before, undoubtedly plausible and even predictable that a portion of viewers would find the representations of Cagney and Lacey problematic, and some for the specific reasons mentioned by CBS. The viewer reaction in any

letters I have seen, was, however, critical of CBS. And TV Guide printed a series of angry responses in its subsequent issue.[86] A sample of excerpts from audience letters from the Cagney and Lacey files reads as follows: "The program Cagney and Lacey is being ruined. I have thoroughly enjoyed it: the actresses had good chemistry and I enjoyed seeing a touch female." And, "With Cagney and Lacey, Meg and Tyne, we at least have a program that shows two women doing a hard job, but we also see an honest and warm friendship. Their chemistry is just right. We can see they care for each other, there isn´t much about a good friendship between women on TV...it´s nice to see two women enjoying this kind of relationship." And, "I read in last week´s TV Guide something about replacing Meg Foster for such reasons as she is too threatening? I don´t understand where TV executives come up with such craziness. I get the feeling there´s a card game at the Hillcrest Country Club called ´Let´s go with the path of least resistance when it comes to women on TV.´ There seems to be a NEED for all women TV stars to be a carbon copy of Cheryl Ladd. Where´s the female Al Pacino? Where is the female Bobby de Niro?" And a final one, "Foster and Daly did a marvelous job of portraying strong, confident women living through some trying and testing circumstances. Too strong? Too aggressive? Come on! They are cops in the city. They aren´t supposed to be fragile, delicate wimps."[87]

Two months after the removal of Meg Foster, CBS may have, in

the words of one reviewer, "shuddered a little"[88] when a new Meg Foster-Tyne Daly episode, which aired on June 21, scored a 38 share and ranked number 2 in the overall ratings. The network continued, however, to manifest its caution and discomfort regarding potentially controversial representations of "woman" or representations of the "new woman" or the "liberated woman" when it pulled the also new episode scheduled for June 28 from the lineup a few hours before air-time. The network said it had received phone calls and letters protesting the episode which was about a Phyllis Schlafly-type anti-ERA spokesperson whom Cagney and Lacey are assigned to protect.[89] Even though the attempt to move the ERA into the constitution had already failed, CBS decided to avoid controversy, pull the episode, and air it later in August. The network´s Standards and Practices Division (the network "censors") had already asked Rosenzweig not to invite Gloria Steinem to appear on the episode as he had originally intended. Steinem, due to an overcrowded schedule, had actually already declined.[90]

CBS´ ultimate decision on Cagney and Lacey was that the series should be revised to "combine competency with an element of sensuality."[91] Its solution was two-fold: to replace Meg Foster with someone more "feminine," and to change Chris Cagney´s socio-economic background. Instead of being from the working class she would now be raised by a wealthy Westchester mother and grandmother. Her father, a retired New York policeman who had

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already been featured in the series, would be the divorced husband of that mother; and the marriage a cross-class mistake. A new CBS press kit was issued to publicize the series in a new way. "Cagney and Lacey," it reads, "are two cops who have earned the respect of their male counterparts and at no expense to their femininity."[91a]

The character, Chris Cagney, after the Meg Foster episodes, also undergoes a radical fashion change to accompany her class change. A memo in the Cagney and Lacey production files reads as follows, "the new budget will include an additional $15,000 for wardrobe costs, the revised concept for character calls for Cagney to wear less middle class, classier clothes so that her upward mobility is evidenced."[92] The overt feminism of the scripts was, after the original series, for the most part removed. An article in Variety quotes April Smith, who was brought in as the new producer for the series, as having "no desire to turn it into a Women´s Lib vehicle."[93]

Before concluding this section which demonstrates some dramatic struggles over the differential acceptability of "toughness" in "woman" and of homo-erotic overtones in women´s friendship, it is important to examine the differential treatment given to the characters Cagney and Lacey regarding these issues. The Swertlow TV Guide article is quite interesting in its presentation of the events. The first paragraph contains the following sentence:

> A CBS programmer, who declined to be named, said the first step in renovating the series was to replace actress Meg Foster, whose character in the show was unmarried...´We decided to keep the character who was played by Tyne Daly,´ said the official, ´because she was less threatening.´[94]

The evidence in this section of the case of Cagney and Lacey points to an extreme discomfort on the part of the network with "woman" represented as working-class, non-glamorous, feminist, sexually active and single, that is, not married or positioned in a family. In the premiere episode Mary Beth Lacey says to Chris Cagney, "I´m a mother/wife/cop with the emphasis on the mother/wife." Chris Cagney, on the other hand, is referred to as an ambitious "hot dog" who wants to be "a star" and "the first woman chief of detectives." "Woman" in the case of the original Chris Cagney manifested too many markers of "non-feminine" according to the industry´s meaning of the term. But she also had no traditional family context to modify or mitigate those differences.

After the Meg Foster episodes, Chris Cagney becomes more of a rugged individualist than a feminist and is actually conservative on many social issues. Mary Beth Lacey carries most of the feminism. A CBS promo for the series makes these new differences between the characters overt. It also foregrounds Chris Cagney´s heterosexuality. The promo begins:

> Mary Beth: Ya know Chris, there´ve been some great women in the 20th century.
> Chris: Yeah! And some great men (dreamily)

Mary Beth: Susan B. Anthony!
Chris: Jim Palmer!
Mary Beth: Madame Curie...
Chris: Joe Montana...ooo can he make a pass!
Mary Beth: (lightly annoyed with Chris) Amelia Airhart!
Chris: The New York Yankees!
Mary Beth: Chris, can´t you think about anything else than men?[95]

In two episodes from last season, however, Cagney was associated with explicity feminist action in filing sexual harassment charges against a captain in the police department. And in a conversation with Lacey from another episode, she overtly rejects the institution of marriage. A more secure place in the ratings, and specific changes in the characterization, it seems, make the network less skittish. The character of Mary Beth Lacey, however, carries on most of the liberal politics. As the series progresses, however, she becomes less of an activist and more the voice of morality, and the law.

Sharon Gless was hired to replace Meg Foster and the new series began in the fall of 1982. Viewers, according to audience letters, were at first reluctant to accept Gless but within two months an avid and large viewer following began to develop. A letter from a viewer who had protested Meg Foster´s removal reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Rosenzweig:

You were oh so right about Sharon on Cagney and Lacey. I enjoy her performances very much now and should have given her a little more time. She has "settled in" (and so have I), I´m sorry my loyalty to another kept me from seeing it sooner.[96]

Gless was seen by the press as bringing "humor," "style," "charisma," and "softness" to Cagney´s character, while still according to some "maintaining the toughness."[97] An irony in the history of the series, which also demonstrates the operation of multiple and contradictory viewer receptions, is that Sharon Gless, according to recently published articles (and viewer letters) has a large lesbian viewing audience. And this audience, as demonstrated by the letters, interprets the Cagney character according to a variety of non-predictable and non-conventional viewing strategies.[98]

This development, seen in relation to the viewer response letters surrounding the removal of Meg Foster and the press comments on the appeal of the friendship between Cagney and Lacey demonstrates quite concretely the ways in which the television industry´s investments in particular notions of "woman" or "femininity," and at least certain viewer investments are at odds. The potential homo-erotic overtones in the representation of the two women which formed a basis for the TV industry´s discomfort were the basis in fact of certain viewers´ pleasure. There is, of course, a continuum of response in this regard, from viewers who respond pleasurably to the fictional representation of a close friendship between Cagney and Lacey to viewers whose viewing strategies purposely highlight the homo-erotic overtones between the characters. An article by Terrence O´Flaherty in the

San Francisco Chronicle alludes to an aspect of this issue,

> One of the title roles was recast due--it was rumored--to network fear of possible hormone imbalance in the characterizations suggesting that Cagney and Lacey were too butch looking to be merely business associates. As a result, Miss Daly´s tomboy quality was balanced by the introduction of a partner with more feminine characteristics than her original co-star....This second-season rematch [is] perhaps more compatible with the network´s definition of a conventional female relationship...[but] who cares if a cop is gay or not as long as he or she shoots straight?[99]

I will now highlight some of the major points of importance in the remaining discursive history of the series. The press by mid-season of the Gless/Daly series was extremely enthusiastic about the program. The stories according to one reviewer are "less gritty, softer, yet much meatier."[100] Rogers and Cowan, the publicity firm hired by Orion TV at $3,500 a month to publicize Cagney and Lacey, devised a whole series of tactics for attracting a larger women´s-target audience. These tactics included mailing letters about the program supposedly written by "Tyne Daly and Sharon Gless" to hundreds of women´s organizations throughout the country, and organizing luncheons with leaders of women´s organizations, prominent women, and women's press.[101] Despite a good deal of critical acclaim, the first season of the Gless/Daly Cagney and Lacey did not do well in the ratings, not even with a women-only target audience. Its competition during much of the season was women-oriented prime-time movies.

Several strategies were devised to save the show. One was

to develop more "exploitable" stories and publicize them in an "exploitation" manner.[102] Cagney and Lacey´s stories became increasingly oriented to "exploitable women´s issues," and began to feature such subject material as pornography, child molestation, male-stripping, a sexual telephone hot-line service, an episode on rape, and one on date rape. The complexities and contradictions involved in television´s representations of "woman" become especially overt in this part of Cagney and Lacey´s history. Although I will not be able to address the issue at any length here, I want to point out that some of the same episodes that are considered exploitation vehicles by the TV industry are episodes that have won Cagney and Lacey awards from such social programs as Rape Crisis and Battered Women´s Centers,[103], and have been considered by many women viewers as extremely helpful on problematic social issues.[104]

Another strategy to save the series and engender a larger women´s audience was to send Tyne Daly and Sharon Gless on a publicity tour to promote the series. In New York, Daly and Gless introduced a screening of an episode on wife-beating. The screening was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Gloria Steinem, and received considerable press coverage.[105] Barney Rosenzweig, as well as the Los Angeles chapter of NOW, coordinated a large letter writing campaign[106] to save the series, and CBS, and major newspapers throughout the country were deluged with volumes of unprecedented viewer mail. Most of the

letters, of which I have read several hundred, write of the importance of the characters, because of their uniqueness in representing women, to the women viewers. The series, however, was cancelled in the spring of 1983 but several factors combined to cause CBS to reverse its decision and bring it back on the air. First, the audience letters continued to come in, and most from the desired target audience: women between the ages of 18 and 54. Secondly, after cancellation, Cagney and Lacey received four Emmy nominations, and Tyne Daly won an Emmy for best dramatic actress. Third, Cagney and Lacey scored number one in the ratings for the first week of the summer re-run period, and remained in the top ten throughout the summer.

After the program was revived, the press, and Cagney and Lacey´s own publicity, stressed the importance of the audience in saving the series. Such headlines as "Flood of Mail From Women Viewers Revives Cagney and Lacey" and "Viewers Hollered Loud Enough to Be Heard," were commonplace. The Cagney and Lacey offices sent bumper stickers to its fans which said "I Helped Save Cagney and Lacey." In this way the audience, which already had a lot invested in the series, was, unlike any other audience in the history of television, represented as being part of the actual production process. This fact, of course, was somewhat exaggerated by the publicity, and fostered for the sake of future ratings. The audience, although a key factor in the decision to revive the series, without the high summer ratings, would not

have caused CBS to reverse its decision. It must also be remembered that CBS hedged its bets by renewing the series with a very limited seven episode trial run.[107]

The filming of the seven trial episodes is a period which exemplifies a number of struggles regarding the meanings and representations of "woman" among the principles involved in the actual production process. I will mention a few specifics. Barney Rosenzweig, set on getting the series renewed beyond the seven episodes, called for such things as a new upgrading of the Chris Cagney look to include "snappier," "jazzier" clothes and a "bouncier" hairstyle. Sharon Gless objected to the new hairstyle because she was hesitant about making Chris Cagney too "frilly."[108]

Major struggles occurred between Rosenzweig and Tyne Daly over issues of glamour and appearance. First, Rosenzweig had wanted to change the Mary Beth Lacey wardrobe for months. He wanted to make it and the character "more fashionable." Tyne Daly, who had designed the Mary Beth Lacey "look," would never agree to the change. Rosenzweig now argued "Mary Beth Lacey is a copy who makes $thirty-thou a year, why does she have to dress like a frump?"[109] Tyne Daly, however, refused to give in. Secondly, Rosenzweig and Daly argued over issues of makeup. Rosenzweig asking Daly to wear more makeup, Daly insisting that her character is a hard-working cop who doesn´t spend the day in front of the mirror.[110] Thirdly, they continually battled about

Lacey´s hairstyle. Rosenzweig would ask Daly´s hairdresser to get to Daly between takes and tease and spray her hair. During one such incident Daly shouted to the crew and production staff, "Can anyone tell me why my producer wants me to look like Pat Nixon?"[111]

During this period, the producers and writers also talked about where to go with the representation of the Chris Cagney character. The discussions revolved around making Cagney a more "sympathetic" character. The producers and writers decided they would do this by making her more "committed" as a character, and this would be done by having her become seriously involved with one man.[112] According to Terry Louise Fisher, a producer and writer for the series, the word "sympathetic" is industry jargon directed almost exclusively toward female characters. When I asked her to articulate the dimensions of the term she said, "it means portray her in traditional ways and situations...have her be the ´little woman,´ show her in the kitchen, show her as warm."[113] The decision to make Cagney "sympathetic" by having her committed to one man was extremely unpopular with viewers. One of the reporters on 60 Minutes, during the "letters-from-viewers" segment, read a letter which called for the removal of Dory (Cagney´s boyfriend) from the Cagney and Lacey series.[114] In recent episodes Cagney was the only one in her precinct to make the rank of sergeant and Lacey had a breast cancer and a baby.

The series is still on the schedule. It doesn´t bring in large gross numbers of target audience, but brings in a sizeable share of target audience women. Last season it won the Emmy for best dramatic program, and Tyne Daly won her third Emmy for best dramatic actress.

There is, I would maintain, a good deal of difference with regard to the representation of "woman" on television in Cagney and Lacey; and television viewers, coming from a variety of social contexts, with a variety of interpretive strategies, produce many different meanings of "woman." But the ways in which the series has been talked about in the mainstream and feminist press, and its support by representatives of the Women´s Movement, by Ms and NOW have, I think, caused the series itself and its representations to become invested with more difference than actually exists. As I mentioned earlier, the differences represented, rooted as they are in liberal notions of politics and representation, imply that social change and difference for women is simply a matter of equal roles, equal jobs and equal representation. Also, I think it can be demonstrated that the Cagney and Lacey narratives have progressively come to valorize Mary Beth´s and Harvey´s situation, the traditional family, and the role of mother and wife, not simply as one of many possibilities but as the satisfying, healthy norm for "woman." Chris Cagney in several narratives has in fact been represented as alone and on the outside of this normal, healthy, and moral

unit. And the practices of exploitation themes and exploitation advertising certainly make problematic the whole notion of "woman," women, and television representation, perhaps especially in programs targetted to a women´s audience and considered to be women´s programs on women´s issues.

On the other hand, at the same time as the character of Lacey works to tack down a normal social position for "woman," the character of Chris Cagney continues to be a trouble to the narratives and the series as a whole. Although Cagney is somewhat pinned down to a familial situation in her relationship with Charlie, her father, and she does, as I mentioned earlier, often speak from conservative social positions, the producers and writers can find no easy ways to anchor her character and settle her in. Representing her in a committed relationship with a man did not work, and, as I mentioned earlier, when she breaks off the relationship she gives an analysis in a conversation with Lacey of why the institution of marriage isn´t for her. the inconsistencies of her character and the shifting conceptualization of her role holds the representation of "woman" at least to some degree open.

Similarly, the representation of friendship between Cagney and Lacey, their numerous conversations and arguments in the Women´s Room, the locker room and the squad car, opens onto issues of women´s culture and women´s communities. Other TV representations, which I think, perform similar functions are the

representations of the over-60-year-old single mystery writer/detective Angela Lansbury in Murder She Wrote, and the non-traditional living communities of Kate and Allie and The Golden Girls. These TV representations hold open at least the possibilities of multiple meanings of "woman."